

The Patil Twins and the Dangers of Spilt Unicorn Blood

by Umpaloompa

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Summary: Padma and Parvati always knew they were destined for greatness - their mother would never let them forget it. Now, heading towards their first year at Hogwarts and inexplicably (but quite logically) separated, the two are in for an adventure that should last way more than just one year. After all, they are only eleven.

1. The Day Before

****AN:**** Well, this is the first story I post here. I was inspired to take another look at Hogwarts and the Harry Potter years through the eyes of some of the minor characters and in my pursuit I kinda/sorta/definitely fell in love with the idea of exploring it through Padma and Parvati's eyes, after suddenly getting heaps of inspiration to develop their background. I hope it's to anyone's interest and I hope it's alright. I'll be reading reviews if they're made and I really enjoy feedback.

****Disclaimers:**** Most of the characters in this will belong to JKR. I've filled in gaps with some of my own characters, and likely some of them will play important roles, but the world itself and any canon characters are hers.

* * *

><p>The Day Before

Parvati's dark brown eyes jolted open, the rays of light that penetrated the curtain making them bolt shut again with the same force and speed. She turned to her side, seeing through her lashes that the bed across from hers was already made and that the clock on the nightstand read _11:40_. She cursed, knowing full well the rest of the family would already be awake. Padma would've woken up hours ago and, naturally, had forgotten to make sure the blackouts were closed behind the curtains, which now made her twin sister remarkably

angry.

She sighed deeply as she pulled the sheets off her body, revealing her pink nightgown, stamped with little drawings of grey elephants. She used her arms to push herself up and sat with her legs dangling beside the bed, using her feet to reach for the fluffy slippers that were placed on the corner. Managing to drag them over, she put them on hastily before standing up, the wooden floor slightly creaking as she made her way to the bathroom the two of them shared. In fact, they shared most things. A room, a bathtub, a wardrobe— Her hand reached to the necklace she never took off. And the letter _P_. The two of them shared the letter _P_.

Using her fingers, Parvati cleaned the sleep from her eyes, grabbing a towel before she got into the warm shower. She lingered in there until her hands were wrinkled and she could not see her reflection from beyond the fogged up glass. She sighed as she turned off the water and wrapped her body in a towel, running her hand over her mirror so she could see herself once again.

The process did not take long. She combed and plaited her long, silky hair and headed back into her room. She settled on wearing something _normal_, a pair of jeans and a white blouse, before opening the door of their room without any care and heading downstairs, where she could already see her family gathered in the living room. Padma had her nose inside a book called _India: Religion and Magic_, clearly one of their father's possessions, the man himself sitting in the armchair beside her, drifting through the day's newspaper. Her mother, who had heard her coming downstairs, appeared from the kitchen door, wearing an apron over her clothes. On one hand, she held a ladle. On the other, her wand. Now _that_ _was_ something Parvati envied.

"Pati, finally, you're up!" she was frowning, her strong Indian accent having been traded for the famous Queen's English when she was only a young girl. "It's 12:15! Lunch is almost ready to be served."

"Sorry, Mama—" Parvati had not finished the apology and her mother was already hurrying back to the stove. She turned towards her father and sister and sat down on the sofa that faced them, staring intently at her nails. Padma looked up from her book and smiled. Parvati had no choice but to return it. For all their differences, she knew that she loved her sister and although some called it remarkable, the two had always gotten on well.

The Patils lived in a comfortable home in the outskirts of London, near Richmond, Surrey. Their two-story house was furnished appropriately, with the perfect setting for an upper-middle class family. The living room was set up with sofas and armchairs, as well as a circular dining table to one side. The walls, lined either with paintings that were passed down through generations or with bookshelves, reflected the interests of both Padma and her father, a muggle-born journalist for the BBC. On one corner, stood a small shrine to Saraswati and Ganesha, the Hindu goddess of intelligence and the god of wisdom, respectively. Both her parents were devotees of the two, and although Parvati was never really religious, Padma, even with her greater intellect, seemed fascinated by their history.

Growing up as half-bloods was an interesting experience, and even at 10, both twins acknowledged how important it had been for them. Although they faced the problems of both worlds, they also managed to extract the best of them: knowing Shakespeare and Scamander, Flemming and Flamel. They also got to taste both chocolate frogs and Mars bars, which wasn't such a bad deal if you really thought about it. Though their mother had initially wanted them to have a complete magical upbringing, even suggesting moving further away from the big city, where they could have proper magical experiences, she also ended up realising that maybe being able to handle themselves in the muggle world wasn't such a terrible thing. Therefore, Padma and Parvati grew up holding both pens and quills, having a dog and an owl as pets. And they loved it. It was sometimes hard to explain to the neighbours how Parvati's dresses remained clean even after she'd spent the day playing in the mud, or how Padma could recite a novel back to front at three years of age, but any special talent was attributed to how perfect the family was, and how their children mirrored the wonders of their parents.

They were, after all, wonders. Their father, Indra Patil, had immigrated to Britain as a young boy, his parents having followed a path to a better life. He had a rough childhood in Croydon, but his dedication got him accepted to LSE and there he stood out as the top of his class and went on to be a celebrated journalist. Their mother, Sima Naik Patil, though apparently a housewife, was a famed Ravenclaw that served as a senior member of the Department of Defence in the Ministry of Magic, before leaving her post and becoming an author with her bestseller, The Balancing of Magic and Muggle, putting in words the story of so many other wizards and witches who had fallen in love with muggle-borns. Of course, these footsteps would be intimidating enough for anyone to follow, although both Padma and Parvati seemed to take them in stride. They were proud of their origins, proud of both their families and they would have never traded places with anyone else.

Padma closed her book suddenly, standing up and heading directly at her sister, making Parvati lose any track of thought she was having. As they looked onto eyes that mirrored the other, Padma's softer voice was about to speak, to say something about what they were sure was to come. Her mother, however, interrupted before she could enunciate the words and the four of them piled onto the dinner table, digging into the curry-lathered chicken that their mother had so carefully prepared.

"This is delicious, honey." Their father spoke, chewing slowly and adjusting his glasses on his nose.

His skin was the darkest of the four and he had a rough look that contrasted greatly with eyes that overflowed with kindness. He had a coarse black stubble that he usually shaved, but for one reason or the other did not that morning. His hair, already receding at the top, was dotted with strands of grey that he made sure to ignore.

Their mother smiled tenderly, nodding a thank you and continuing to eat with her gentle, graceful movements. Her hair was also black, mirroring the softness that was attributed to their daughters'. She kept it right above her shoulder-line, giving her the look of an alpha-mother that did not only captivate with her charm, but could easily attack like a bear if anything threatened her cubs. Her skin

was olive-toned and her eyes a bright hazel, ever watchful. If it wasn't almost blasphemous, she was sure to be compared to a goddess.

Although they made simple conversation, neither one of the twins could contain their excitement. Tomorrow was the day. No matter how much they tried to look away or disguise it, there was only one thing their eyes constantly landed on.

That wandâ€¦|

Padma tried to control her thoughts, and she could see by the look on Parvati's eyes that her sister thought the same. The truth was, neither of them could bear to wait any longer for that day. The day when they would be allowed to follow in their mother's footstepsâ€¦|_If only it could come sooner_. They were not eleven yet, but both of them knew why today they were haunted by these intrusive ideas, and why today they would continue indefinitely to be haunted by them. Today was the eve of March 18th. The eve of their 11th birthday.

Their parents exchanged a smile, knowing full well what the twins had their minds on. Their father, accepting with polish that there was a whole world beyond his that he could not and dared not try to understand, put down his fork and smiled.

"I'veâ€¦| I've already ordered the cake." he began in a deep, rich voice.

"And I know what you guys are expecting, and I'm sure it's bound to come, but we _will _be spending the day like we do every year." Their mother added, looking with stern eyes that were cancelled out by her kind smile.

"Kew Gardens, here we comeâ€¦|" Parvati rolled her eyes.

Beside her, Padma perked up, remembering something they both deemed of utmost importance.

"Will _she _be there?" she said, making sure to stress that whoever _she_ was, she was not welcomed.

"No." her mother answered, although a look that resembled disappointment came over her face. "I said we'd be doing something just the four of us this yearâ€¦|"

Parvati and Padma exchanged a look that was a mixture of victory and satisfaction. They weren't going to let anyone ruin their day. Together, they silently congratulated each other delightedly on what was sure to be their best birthday yet.

2. Birthday Wishes

**AN: **I hope those who read it enjoyed the first chapter. I know there's not a lot going on right now, but I promise it gets better as we go along (Hogwarts!).

* * *

><p>Birthday Wishes

For the first time since they had attended school, Parvati woke up at exactly _7:15_. Normally, it would have been way too early for her to _think_; much less wake up, but today was different. Today was her 11th birthday, and although she knew perfectly well that in the muggle world being eleven meant nothing, it was different for them. Today was the day she was going to get her letter, and she was sure of it.

She heard a giggle coming from beneath the baby-blue sheets that covered the bed on the other side of the room, and turned to face it, returning the giggle as her sister sprouted from the other side, a smile etched onto her face.

"Happy birthday, Pati!" Padma laughed harder, running her fingers through her long hair.

Parvati yanked the pillow she kept between her legs and threw it at her sister, causing yet another laughing fit for the both of them.

"Happy birthday, Paddi!" she replied giddily, leaping from her bed onto her sister's, where the both of them shared a hug and continued to blissfully enjoy the fact that finally, after countless years of waiting, their day had arrived.

Their door opened with a creak and their parents filed in, holding a cake. They too mimicked their daughters' smiles, singing happy birthday as the air around them filled with joy. No matter what was going to happen, the two of them were ridiculously delighted, and they made sure their daughters knew it.

"Who knew Pati could get up this early?" their father teased as they both blew out the candles. Parvati rolled her eyes, as she often did, and the four of them shared a hug.

"Get ready and come downstairs!" their mother beamed, urging them out of bed. "We'll be waiting!"

It took the both of them exactly 20 minutes to get ready. They agreed that one would wait for the other so that they could enjoy this day the way they had enjoyed all the previous ones: together. They were not about to let each other go now, of all times.

Everything was done in a rush, of course, and their mother had to straighten Padma's plait and zip up Parvati's summer dress properly. Nonetheless, the atmosphere was wonderful. Downstairs, their parents had surprised them with a full birthday breakfast, and numerous gifts that they promised would not be all they'd get, since _Diagon Alley_ still awaited them.

Padma's mind immediately fluttered to the place. They'd been there a few times, to run errands with their mother, and every time it was like entering paradise. Though there were a few corners they promised themselves they'd never enter, just the environment was filled with all the hopes and dreams they carried, and both of them could only wish for their time to try on those robes and pick their own wands, or, as Ollivander would say, for their wands to pick _them_.

Showered in gifts, Parvati made a mental note to never reveal just how spoiled they both were to anyone they met. Thankfully, their parents also taught them that success came with struggle, and that humbleness was necessary no matter how much you managed to achieve.

Padma, her wit shining as usual, had retorted that perfectly with a loaded question towards her mother. "Then how come you ever allow _her _to come over?"

Parvati, however, would not have it and quickly interrupted her sister. "Paddi, let's not talk about her today, please. We're already going to have to live with her for years and years and years andâ€¦"

"I got it."

Ignoring the exchange between her daughters, Sima Patil made her way towards the front door, noticing they had not yet received any signs of an owl. She checked her watch; the perfect muggle invention that she only wished her world would absorb and noted that it was still early. Her own owl, after all, had only arrived in the afternoon. She decided not to say anything to the twins, knowing that they would already be nervous, as she was, with the fear of not receiving anything. Instead, she made sure that everyone finished their breakfast quickly, so that by _9:00_ the family was already piling out of the house, ready for their yearly outing to the botanical gardens.

Although Padma and Parvati would probably have killed to stay at home looking through the windows to catch the exact moment the bird would deliver their most-awaited gift, the two of them knew that distracting their minds was probably the best course of action, so they allowed themselves to enjoy what they did every year, as they always did. Routines weren't all bad.

Kew Gardens was an amazing place. They played in the open grass; climbed the trees around them, laughing when they'd fall down and their mother would look at them worried, only for them to brush themselves off and watch as scrapes were gently washed away; they fed the ducks using small pieces of bread and explored the largest Victorian greenhouse in the world whilst their parents stretched out a clichÃ© red-and-white tablecloth as they rested in the sunlight, watching over their daughters.

Padma and Parvati were out of earshot of their parents and both pairs intensely discussed things the other was not meant to hear.

"We should prepare them, Indra. I know we have to think positive, but we must prepare them. I feel stupid for not having done so before and to have filled them with such hope, but what ifâ€¦" Her husband lovingly put his finger on her lips.

"If the time comes that it should be discussed, we will do so, but not right now. You told me yourself, there's been no history of a Squib in your family and please, our girls have shown signs of magic since before they could crawlâ€¦" his face suddenly darkened with realisation. "And this is not about you. It's about me." His face fell and he looked disappointed as he turned to his wife for an

explanation.

Sima felt embarrassed about what she'd even suggested, and thankfully succeeded in holding back tears. They would not have been her allies right then. "I'm sorry," she pleaded. "You know I will never hold it against you and that I love you. And I lost any of my prejudices a long time ago, the moment I set eyes on you. It's not what I meant. I would never blame you and I love you, and I'm ashamed that the thought even crosses my mind. I don't regret anything, Indra, believe me. I justâ€¦"

He kissed her, holding her face with the palms of his hands as his lips grazed hers, again and again until she gave up trying to apologise. Half because he wanted to and half because he knew that the fact he was a muggle-born was hard on her. He wished deeply that he could change it, knowing it was impossible. He knew how much she loved him and how difficult it was for her, toâ€¦ _What were the words of her grandfather?_ _Ahâ€¦ Destroy the family lineage_, but still, he was surprised to hear the words from her.

Her parents had not easily acknowledged him, but he had managed after a while to find himself in their good graces. _At least he's Indianâ€¦_ The generation above theirs, however, was a different story. And Indra knew. He knew that even though Sima was his and he was hers, that even though she fully accepted him, the ideals that plagued the seas of days gone by still poisoned the well of the present.

She managed to control herself and sighed, revolted that she had even suggested such a thing and attempting to say sorry once again, though he would not have it. Deep down, they both feared for their daughters. They both feared for their fates. But they were also filled with love and with pride and with compassion beyond measure, and they made sure that Padma and Parvati knew that no matter what the future had in store for them, they would always have a home within their parents' hearts.

Sima sunk into Indra's arms and remained there as he wrapped them tightly around her, carefully planting a kiss on her forehead as the two of them continued to observe their treasures, two little girls that were way too smart for their own good.

"They're talking about us." Parvati mentioned casually, looking above at where her sister was dangling from a large oak tree's branch. Padma dropped down beside her and looked at her sister knowingly.

"Course they're talking about us. It's our eleventh birthdayâ€¦ Everyone says that this day is always big in a wizard's life, but it's also scary. Daddy is muggle-born, after allâ€¦ But it's all right. We're all frightened of the same thing anyway, they just want us to keep smiling and not realise that they're scared too."

"What'cha on about, Paddi? Us? Squibs? _Please_â€¦ We were witches from the day we were born! I'm not scared of that. It'sâ€¦ It's something else."

Padma stared at her sister quizzically; head slightly angled to the left, her brain trying to work out what exactly was running through

her twin's mind. "What are you on about, Pati?"

Parvati tried to speak, to decide how exactly she was going to put into words all the emotion that exploded within her. Padma was not ready for the outburst. Tears started running down her cheeks as she grabbed her sister's hands and pulled her close, embracing her in a hug. "I'm scared for us, Paddi. I'm scared we're going to be split up and that I'll lose you to some stupid bloke you like and that we're going to have different mates and different classes and then we'll stop meeting during breaks and then we'll stop speaking andâ€¦"

"Stop!" Padma almost commanded in a voice much stronger than her usual soft tones. "Who the hell are you and what have you done to my sister? Pati, you know that would never happenâ€¦ Even if we do split up, we'll find each other. We always do."

Parvati nodded and allowed her twin to wipe away the last few tears. She smiled genuinely, grabbing onto her necklace. Padma did the same, looking at Parvati with adoration in her eyes and they hugged once again, before the latter let go.

"Look at what you do to me, you minger, I swear if you weren't my sisterâ€¦" she laughed, tripping slightly over her dress as she began to run back towards her parents. "And now I'm famished. And I'm calling this a race. Last one to Mama and Papa is a rotten egg."

Padma shook her head and rolled her eyes, taking on, for a split second, the role of Parvati. Then she began running like she had never ran before, laughing as the two of them stumbled over the other as they reached the spot where their parents were still embraced.

Padma knew her sister had won, but she would never, ever admit it. Parvati had gotten a head start, after all. Their parents smiled endearingly as they settled down. The sun shone above with surprising strength for early spring, and the breeze was cool, but fresh. And the four of them did not touch the subject again, relying instead on each other's company, knowing that the future would be revealed later that night and that none of them actually needed, or wanted, to know before the time.

They got home just before sunset, with the air getting colder as the night settled in. Padma and Parvati went inside before their parents, who sighed in relief as they walked right past two green-wrapped presents at the door.

"I'll write her a thank you." Sima nodded to her husband, as he collected the two gifts and put them deep within his pocket. The two looked at each other with worried eyes as she leaned into him. They shared the same concern.

The moment was fleeting, however, as screams from within the house brought them to their feet, running inside. Sima whisked her wand from her bag, having it at the ready, a charm on the tip of her tongue.

What they found, however, was that aggression was not necessary. As they charged into their living room, not even aware of the mud they

were bringing into the white carpet, they found their daughters crying and hugging each other, but smiles engraved deeply into their faces. Sima too began to cry as she hurried towards them and Indra ran forward and embraced his three girls. In each of their hands was a letter, a letter that they held on with all the force they could with the strength their short eleven years provided.

"We made it, Paddi! We made it!" Parvati exclaimed as she dodged her father's arms and ran towards the office, grabbing his silver letter-opener and tearing into the Hogwarts seal, ripping the envelope as she grabbed the letter and ran her eyes over it again and again, relishing in her results. Padma's reaction was less extreme, but still just as enthusiastic. She carefully removed the seal, careful not to damage a potential keepsake and cautiously unfolded the letter, smiling to herself as tears dropped from her eyes to the floor as her fingers traced the words that cemented her acceptance into the school her mother had gone to all those years ago.

Sima herself was in no normal state. She was ecstatic and she was jumping around with her daughters, waving her wand so that the stains disappeared from the floor. _Avis_, she whispered, and a flock of canaries shot from the end of her wand, the birds dancing around them, filling the house with a burst of happiness it had waited for and desired. Even Indra, who had never experienced such a thing, was feeling it in his own bones. His children, his darlings, witches! _Witches!_ He gathered them up and showered them with kisses, dancing around them as if he understood, because deep down, they all knew he did.

Whilst the three kept celebrating, Sima began to analyse the list of required materials that was attached to each of their letters. She made a mental note to take them to _Diagon Alley_, where she was sure they'd be able to sort it all out. Padma was beaming with excitement as she traced the list of books over and over again, memorising their names as she imagined their contents from the titles. They were also allowed a pet: a rat, which was out of the question; an owl, which she wouldn't mind or a cat, which was what she really desired. She was sure Parvati would settle on the bird anyway, which meant she could always ask her sister if she needed anything sent home.

What both the twins most desperately desired on the list, however, were not books or pets or materials, but rather that one bullet point distinctly marked with Minerva McGonagall's calligraphy: _1 wand_. A wand. That's all they really wanted. To be able to reflect their mother's movements and grace as she flicked her 10½-inch, rosewood with coral core wand and produced all the magic she held within her. Their father would sometimes sigh as his wife went around the house, suddenly putting everything in order. She was not only a stay-at-home mother, of course, having been a skilled dueller back in her day.

_ No Protego would hold back my Expelliarmus, no Incendio burn a greater fire! _

Parvati remembered the words her mother had spoken to her of past days in Hogwarts, speaking not only of herself, but also of various classmates, some of who she'd met before, even if just on a street corner on a cloudy day. Padma had always enjoyed the stories, but she preferred the spells themselves. She yearned to know them all, to master them all. For any of that, however, she needed a wand. And now, finally, she would have it.

Needless to say, it took them many hours of celebration before the two of them fell asleep on the sofa, Padma leaning onto her father as Parvati slumped over her mother's lap. Sima hummed quietly as her fingers smoothly ran through her daughter's hair. She looked over at Indra, biting her bottom lip and closing her eyes to avoid yet another tear, before opening them again and mouthing an honest _thank you_. They had done it and they had done it together, as a couple, as a family.

They sat there in silence for a while, observing the twins' gentle sleep, tenderly taking in the moment. Indra was the first to move, scooping up Padma in his arms as Sima used her wand to carry Parvati up the stairs. The two of them tucked their daughters in, each receiving a loving kiss from their parents.

As they left the room and silently closed the door, Sima threw her arms around her husband, who leaned down, using his hands to bring her chin up and kissing her lips once again. This time, they did not stop until Indra picked up Sima with obvious ease and carried her into their own bedroom, shutting the door. The day had also been a celebration for them.

3. Diagon Alley

****AN: **Thank you to the people that followed/favourited/reviewed!
:D**

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><p>Diagon Alley

Sima stood behind her two daughters, having one hand placed over each of their shoulders in a protective manner as they cautiously made their way into the _Leaky Cauldron_. The bar, shabby though it may have been, was one of the few releases wizards living in muggle London could enjoy, as well as the entrance of the famous _Diagon Alley_. This meant that even during the hours of the day, the bar was always full and boasted a large clientele of the most intriguing kind.

Padma looked around intently, observing each corner of the place. To the left, a group of old witches in brown, pointed hats whispered softly as they showed each other dancing photos of what she assumed were most likely children and grandchildren. Beside them, a large man slept on one of the tables as a waitress tapped on his shoulder, trying to awaken him after what was clearly a heavy night. She looked towards the bar, not at the stools, dotted with one wizard or another, but rather behind them, where the barkeep smiled and waved as she looked towards their mother.

"Si! Now there's a sight for sore eyes!" she said, wiping her hands on her apron as she beckoned for them.

"It's been way too long, Sarah." Sima confessed, shaking her head as she pulled her daughters forward.

"My, my! How they've grown!" the other woman replied, before looking back towards a flight of stairs that led to the inn found above the

bar. "'Annah!" she shouted. "Paddi and Pati are here!"

It wasn't long before a blonde-haired girl with a low ponytail and very pale skin popped her head through the door. She was taller than the twins and very thin; with brown eyes that had a definite shine to them one simply couldn't explain. She was wearing robes; black with yellow lining that were way too big for her, and which Sima immediately recognised as her former classmate's robes from 4th year, judging from the singe on the shoulder that she had inflicted herself in Charms class. Hannah Abbott laughed as she waved her hands around, the sleeves dancing, following her movements. The yellow lining fit her incredibly well; as if there was no way in hell she would not follow her mother's footsteps into Hufflepuff. She tripped over the robe, her feet catching onto its edges, but the twins were already holding her and hugging her. Though they hadn't seen each other in what were probably only a few weeks, it felt like it had months.

"Did'ya get my gift?" she inquired, looking at them intently as the twins remembered the two mugs, one red, one blue, that showed images of twinkling stars and planets far from the one they inhabited. Padma had been fascinated by it; watching closely as the planets moved and a shooting star flew over the designs. Parvati had been less interested, but appreciative that their lifelong friend had remembered them.

"We did! And we loved it! Thanks." Padma replied, arms still linked to her friend's as they turned towards their mothers, who were still catching up on what they probably considered were extremely important news.

"You would not believe who was here, Siân! Hagrid. And there was a young boy with him thatâ€¦"

The twins and their friend could only catch parts of the conversation, but by the dire looks imprinted on Sima's face, they understood it was not a laughing matter. Padma once again began to observe the environment around her.

The Abbott family had inherited the Leaky Cauldron only a few years ago, after the death of a great-uncle or some similar distant relative, but already they had tried their best to clean up the place. Hannah's father was a muggle, just like the twins' own, but he was less inclined to accept the whole magic business, and although he and her mother remained close, he lived in an apartment a few streets away from the bar. Hannah saw him many times, though, and even if she clearly desired to be like her mother, parts of her sometimes wished her father could accept the situation with greater polish.

The three girls continued to talk about their days until Sima kissed her friend goodbye, once again urging the twins to follow her. They exchanged their farewells, which were, all things considered, only really a see you soon and followed their mother towards the backdoor of the bar. Sima looked back and waved a final time before pulling the twins through with her. They found themselves in a cold alleyway surrounded by grey bricks. Padma pulled her sister closer as both of them shivered beneath their matching blue coats. Their mother, in a red shawl that she brought higher up to her neck, made her way towards a very specific wall, where she took out her wand, making sure her hand wasn't shaking as she tapped a specific pattern

of bricks.

She let out a small sigh as the wall parted, revealing a clamouring street bustling with people. Taking a quick glance, one might even consider it was just another one of London's hectic shopping districts. A closer inspection, however, revealed that not only the commuters were dressed in a very interesting fashion, but also that the stores were not necessarily the ones you'd see everyday. Though the skies above were cloudy and the air crisp, Padma suddenly felt very warm, excited as the three of them made their way into this world they had only visited a few times.

_Diagon Alley. _They were awestruck as galleons were exchanged and words they had never once heard, much less could even try and pronounce, were whispered nonchalantly. The storefronts advertised the most phenomenal of goods, some of a more normal quality, such as cauldrons or robes. Others, presented items that Padma imagined were used to brew potions: newt eyes, bat wings and lacewing flies, among various ingredients listed in blackboards and signs.

Their mother made approving sounds as she read the list she had copied down from their acceptance letters, heading into a dark store, cramped onto a street corner, and coming out again holding two cauldrons. The next step, she mentioned, as she headed towards a bright shop decorated with piles and piles of novels, was the bookstore.

It was Sima's second home, and the place where she clearly stood out as one of the best. As she entered, an attendant whispered something to another and a woman smiled as she saw her, fishing the book Sima had written and asking her to sign it. The twins' mother gladly took out a quill and inquired as to whom she should make it out to. Whilst the woman began telling her own life story of how she fell in love with a muggle, Padma and Parvati escaped their mother's watch and began to pick out the books they required for their first year.

"Pati! Here!" Padma yelled out as she grabbed two copies of _Magical Theory_ by Adalbert Waffling. She missed her footing as she went down the stepladder, landing on her back on the floor, the books flying from her hands. She heard a laugh as a young boy walked over to her and held out a hand. He had a long nose and a fair complexion, with very blond hair and a chain that held the Star of David pressed against his clothes. He helped lift her up and they picked up the books. He held out an awkward hand and she took it, using her other to brush out the strands of hair that had covered her face.

"'Ello!" he said, his strong northern accent impregnating his words. "I'm Anthony Goldstein."

"Padma. Padma Patil," she replied. "Thank you for the helpâ€¦ I seem to have taken on more than I could handleâ€¦"

Her cheeks flushed as she revealed her mistake, a slight red hue flashing on her dark skin.

"_Magical Theory_â€¦" he noted, handing the book back to her. "I s'pose I'll be seein' you at Hogwarts, then?"

"Yeah, I supposeâ€¦ Are you a first year too?" she inquired.

"Yeah!" he replied, enthusiastically, looking back to see his parents were already leaving the shop. "Well, I'll see ya at school then, Padma Patil."

"See youâ€|" she whispered, as he walked away.

Padma turned around to face her sister, who had a leering smile on her face as she shook her head, raising an eyebrow to signal the boy she was just talking to.

"And who was that, exactly?" she laughed teasingly.

"A friend?" she hoped. "I guess we'll find out properly soon enoughâ€|" Padma walked past her sister and slammed one of the books into her, continuing on her search for the others she needed. Parvati huffed, but turned around and said nothing more.

When they were finished, which would have taken not nearly as much time if their mother had not spent so long talking to fans that stopped her numerous times for tips and autographs, they paid for the books and headed out. After walking past a few more shops, Parvati noticed a large white building made of marble and adorned with gold that occupied a significant portion of its street. She looked at her mother, who understood the question that emanated from her daughter's eyes.

"That's _Gringott's_," she explained. "The Wizarding World's bank. Muggle money can be exchanged, and deposits of currency or other important possessions can be made. Your father and I have a vault there, although I'm pretty sure he doesn't even know of its existence. Nonetheless, there's no need for the both of you to worry about that at the moment. I'm sending you with enough money to last at least until the Christmas holidays and goblinsâ€|" she wondered how she could finish the sentence without sounding like her grandfather. "Goblins are not the most pleasant of creatures."

With that, she subtly put an end to that conversation, exclaiming as they found themselves directly in front of a tailor's. The twins walked in behind their mother, who immediately greeted the seamstress. From behind the curtains, they could hear the screams of a girl, who seemed to be complaining about her robes.

"Have you seen the colour of this, mum? Have you seen how hideous this makes me look?" the girl's accent was nearly aristocratic. "At Beauxbatons the robes look absolutely fabulous, but no. I have to wear this."

"Lavvy, pleaseâ€|" her mother implored, "You look beautiful, as always."

And she was. As Lavender Brown stepped out of the changing room, even with a look of disdain stamped on her face, she looked positively stunning. Though only eleven, she looked much older, with her dirty blonde hair making waves over her back and shoulders and her eyes vivid through a clear complexion. She waved her fingers and smiled sweetly as she passed the twins, whisked away by her mother, who looked disconcerted by her outburst, the aforementioned robe hastily packed into a bag.

"I like her." Parvati stated, nodding with approval.

"Of course you do." Padma retorted, as she followed the seamstress to the dressing room previously occupied by Lavender.

Unlike the previous client, the twins managed to put their affairs in order quickly, Parvati albeit disappointed that the robes had to be black, which she believed would drown her out considering their skin tone. The one thing they both questioned, of course, was what colour lining their robes would take. It would be same for both of them, naturally, since they were bound to be sorted to the same house, but they were curious anyway.

"It makes all the difference." Parvati affirmed with confidence, earning a slight smile from her mother, a previous Ravenclaw whose best friends were a Slytherin and a Hufflepuff.

Her daughters would find out soon enough that it didn't make all the difference. At least she hoped they would. There were two stops left that they had to make. The first was to pick a pet, since she'd promised that they could take one along. She had left the wands for last on purpose: it was, after all, the highlight of their trip. She recalled her own past in Diagon Alley, when Ollivander had handed her that wand and in that moment, everything seemed to perfectly belong. She wanted the twins to feel the same, and so built up their anticipation as they entered the second-to-last stop.

The pet store was ghastly. Owls flew around uncontrollably and inside tanks a plethora of different aquatic creatures, ranging from normal fishes to newts and fire crabs resided. In different cages, cats mewed and in one corner, a Jack Russell Terrier much larger than common ones they'd seen slept, ignorant to all the noise that erupted around them. As screeches and dirt fed on Sima's nerves, Padma and Parvati had already started making rounds.

Padma found herself staring intently at a spotted cat with yellow fur and hypnotising hazel eyes. The shopkeeper appeared beside her with an approving smile.

"Wonderful choice, miss." He spoke with a kind voice, opening the cage and picking up the cat with practiced ease. "We have not yet named him, but he's a savannah cat. It's a breed originally from Africa, the cross of a domestic cat with a serval. Though the muggles claim it was their own doing, it would have been impossible without a little bit of magic."

"May Iâ€|" she began, reaching out for the cat. The man gladly handed him over and the cat nuzzled her as she ran her fingers through its smooth fur. "Gremlinâ€|" she whispered, as she continued petting the cat, giggling slightly the choice of name she'd made, aware that any pureblood friends would never understand the joke, but she'd made her choice.

Parvati, meanwhile, had settled on a great grey owl she chose because of its imposing stature. She had not yet picked out a name, but that did not matter. She could deal with that later. Their mother had been waiting for them on the steps of the store, and was glad they chose their pets quickly. Honestly, she wasn't sure she'd be able to handle the shop's atmosphere for much longer.

"Only one item left!" she noted, looking at her list, although all three of them knew what she was talking about. Padma and Parvati exchanged a look of exhilaration. Finally, it was time.

"Wands at the ready!" Parvati whispered, loud enough only for her sister to hear, as they linked arms and walked down the road to Ollivander's.

"There's that boy again." Parvati teased, nudging her sister as Anthony Goldstein waved and showed them his new acquisition. Padma let go of Parvati, who in turn walked into the shop, her mother quickly following, leaving Padma alone to exchange a few quick words with Anthony.

"11¼ inches, made of blackthorn and dragon heartstring!" he showed off, in a way that wasn't really boastful, but rather trying to impress.

"It's beautiful!" Padma sighed. "But if you'll excuse me, I need one of my own!"

Anthony smiled and waved her goodbye as he ran to catch up with his parents, both of who were present. She wished her father could have come, but she understood the necessity of keeping muggles away from this place, no matter how close they were to any wizard or witch. She pushed the feeling away and turned around, opening the door and making a doorbell jingle as she headed inside.

The store was musty, with a staircase to the side that led to a second floor and shelves that went from floor to ceiling all carrying small, rectangular boxes filled with wands. As she approached the counter where her sister stood, she could make out Ollivander, a small, white-haired man with beady eyes. Rumours said he was the best wand-maker out there, and she wasn't about to speak against that. From the beam in her sister's face, she knew immediately he was fantastic.

"It's! It's fab, Paddi." Parvati sighed, holding in her right hand a sturdy wand, very different to their mother's. "It's 9½ inches, made of rosewood and unicorn hair. And it's absolutely perfect."

Padma could see her mother tearing up to one side and her sister stepped away from the counter so she could take her place.

"Padma Patil!" Ollivander's voice was coarse and rough, but he reeked of experience and wisdom. "Padma Patil! Padma Patil!" he repeated her name as he began searching through his collection. "Padma Patil." He finally settled on an emerald velvet box, which he brought forward and opened. "Give it a go," he commanded, handing it over to her. Padma was not sure what to do, but flicked it and sent a few other wands flying.

"Hm!" he questioned. "No. No."

He took the wand from her hands and continued on his search, smiling finally as he brought forward a blue box this time. She picked up the wand and suddenly a raw feeling she could not describe filled her to the core. It was as if the wand she now held was part of her, an extension of her arm and her mind.

She gracefully moved her hand and the wands that littered the floor rose once again to their places. She looked at him and he nodded. "10½ inches, also made of rosewood, but with a core of dragon heartstring. It seems that the twins who share so much on the surface are in reality quite singular withinâ€|" he noted, a tone of council in his voice, raising a hand to adjust his glasses as he entrusted them with his creations.

They thanked him profoundly, heading out of the store in silent. Sima continued to cry, although she was doing an excellent job of hiding it. The pride she had in her daughters, however, was apparent. As they continued to walk back to the _Leaky Cauldron, _and then out into the streets of London as they made their way home, Padma and Parvati were still lost in their thoughts. None of them said a word. None of them needed to.

4. New Beginnings

****AN: ****Thank you to the people who are following this! I'm sorry it took a little while, but I haven't had the time to post this. It's a short chapter, but it does what it needs to do before we properly get to where the action is.

* * *

><p>New Beginnings

On the last night of August, Parvati had not slept. As the sun rose on the first of September, she was still sitting on the wooden chair in the garden, observing as the stars faded into the blue. She was tired, definitely, the bags beneath her eyes and the yawn she so desperately held back being the enemies that would no doubt reveal her sleepless night. She had tried. She had lain in bed for hours, watching her sister's chest rise up and down as Padma slept calmly, but she failed to do the same. She was too excited and too nervous and so she ditched the warmth of her bed, wrapping herself in a cardigan and resigning herself to the fact that she would remain awake. As the time drifted on, she found herself imagining what Hogwarts was like, how she'd fit in and the friends she would make. She thought about Padma and Hannah, and the girl from the tailor's. And night turned to day as she sat still in that chair, breathing in and out the air of that summer night. She was ready. She knew she was.

She hadn't realised she had fallen asleep, right there on that chair, until her father woke her up at 8:00sharp. He had understood why he hadn't been allowed to go with them to _Diagon Alley_, but Indra would be damned if he was about to let his daughters go to boarding school without taking them as far as he could go. He realised that he wouldn't be able to leave them on the train the way Sima could, but he could go with them until the entrance to Platform 9¾. And he would.

"Long night, Pati?" he asked, gently waking up Parvati from her rest.

"You have no idea, Papaâ€|" she replied, stretching out her arms and yawning. She was tired and slightly afraid, homesick already if she

was honest, but she was also thrilled. Her father smiled as he helped her up, both of them facing the glass doors that led to the kitchen, where Padma and Sima were already making breakfast.

The four of them sat together, enjoying the last few moments they'd have of each other's company until the twins would return home for Christmas, as was their deal. The air was also filled with excitement, however. Padma and Parvati could not wait for their arrival to their new home, and though it was positively bittersweet for Indra, Sima was completely head-over-heels to see her daughters following her own footsteps.

Padma and Parvati took longer to get ready than most days, as if trying to hold on to a piece of their current lives, knowing that everything would change the moment they'd be fully immersed in their mother's world. They said goodbye to their small, but comfortable room and to the beds they'd slept in all their lives before heading out of the door and closing it.

Their bags had been brought downstairs the previous night, making it easy to take all of their belongings to the car. Another muggle invention Sima adored, she had never gotten the gist of driving, however. At 9:30 the family left their home, making their way towards King's Cross Station. The traffic was clear, with not many cars on the street, and they arrived at the station in record time.

Even though it was essentially muggle architecture, the train station was breath-taking. Large columns and stone made their way for curved glass windows and archways that invited them inside. Though the streets themselves were not yet bustling, inside the station there were groups of people already gathered, awaiting for arrivals or passing their time until departures. Knowing the way they had to take, Sima wasted no time in guiding her family through the corridors and booths that decorated the place. There were a total of six hidden platforms at King's Cross, each headed to a specific location accessible only to those with magical inclinations. Only one in particular, however, was of their interest. Soon, they were at Platform 9, and she could not help but smile as she saw the familiar brick wall, a gateway to her world.

She stopped suddenly and looked back at Indra. "Thisâ€¦ Youâ€¦" Sima wasn't sure how to phrase it. She wasn't sure how to tell her husband that this is where he would have to say goodbye to their daughters. It was 10:30 already, time having flown as they made small-talk, none of them wanting to touch the subject of farewell and so when they had arrived there, Sima had not been sure how to address it. Indra, however, smiled and nodded, unoffended and understanding. He knelt down, looking his daughters in the eye.

"Now then, girls, you be good. I know you'll make us proud and I promise you we'll see each other soon. I wish I could go in there with you, I wish I could carry on, but you knowâ€¦ Muggle dad and all that." He rubbed his head, trying to continue smiling as tears began to appear in his eyes and a feeling of uselessness began to crawl over him.

The two girls threw their arms around him, bidding him goodbye and telling him that they promised they'd be back soon and that they loved him, that even if he was not a wizard, they'd never have chosen anyone else. His heart jumped at the sudden declarations, but he

found he had no choice but to let them go. They had a bright future ahead of them and he was not about to stand in their way.

He waved goodbye as they charged towards the wall, suddenly disappearing in front of his eyes. Sima kissed him quickly and followed the two, leaving him alone to his thoughts, his hands pressed against the stone as if, somewhere within him, his hopes had not yet died.

Parvati gasped as she found herself on a single platform, a bright red train on its tracks. Though she was disappointed her father could not see this, she still relished in the bustling atmosphere. Unlike the other platforms, this one was crowded and alive. There was a lot of crying, from the first-year parents mostly, as those whose children were already older consoled their friends, telling them that it was for the best, reminding them of past accomplishments and how their children were sure to have the time of their lives. Old friends hugged and clapped each other's backs as groups of girls giggled and whispered, pointing as they caught up on exactly what had happened during the summer.

"No sign of _her_." Padma whispered to her sister, clutching her hand tightly. "Is it awful for me to hope she doesn't make it?"

Parvati laughed, but the moment was short-lived as their mother called on them to help put their baggage on one of the carriages. They went forward and placed their luggage in specific compartments. From afar, they spotted Hannah and waved, a gesture she returned, smiling. Sima hurried over to whisper a few words to her mother, before going back to them.

"Well nowâ€¦" she said, looking over a clock and seeing it was already 10:50. "I suppose you two better hurry on up." She sniffled, breathing heavily as tears began to roll down her cheeks and she wrapped her arms around her daughters. "I love you both and write, please. Write a lot. And I know you'll have the time of your lives, but keep me informed and don't make me go after you." Padma began to cry too, but her sister's harsh look made her swallow her tears. This was their mother's moment to break, and they had to be strong for her. A chubby ginger woman with kind eyes came over to her and handed her a tissue.

"Now, now, Siâ€¦ There's no need for tears! Imagine if we'd never beenâ€¦" she spoke soothingly, smiling at the twins.

"I know, Mollyâ€¦ I know." Sima replied, finding comfort in the arms of the woman who was clearly a few years older than she was. To Padma, it seemed as if her mother had cried on those motherly shoulders before. "She's right, girls. You two go on now. And I love you!"

Sima continued waving as Padma and Parvati made their way onto the third carriage, caught between a bustle of scared faces that most likely reflected their own and the shouts of reunion that echoed as old friends suddenly found each other once again. They made their way through the cabins, not knowing exactly where they'd fit, unsure and hoping that there was still an empty one somewhere they could be alone in.

"Hey you two!" a girl's voice shouted from behind them, but they did

not think it was addressing them. A moment followed before the voice spoke again. "I'm talking to you, twins!"

Parvati and Padma stopped in their tracks, turning around not knowing the origin of the voice until they saw its owner. It was the girl from the tailor's, the one they had only briefly met, but whose voice and complaints they would definitely recognise from anywhere. She called them over with her hands, opening the door to her cabin for them. They sighed in relief as they made their way to her and piled inside, Padma taking her seat by the window, beside two boys, one of whom she was happy to see again, and Parvati sitting across from her, beside the girl.

"Now then," the girl began. "I'm Lavender Brown, and I'm sorry our previous introduction was so brief. These two are Ernie MacMillan andâ€|"

"Anthony Goldstein." Padma completed Lavender's sentence, much to the latter's surprise. "Nice to see you againâ€|"

"Always is," he joked, earning him an eye-roll from both Parvati and Lavender. The other boy was quieter than Anthony and very big for his age, though not fat. He had dirty blond hair like Lavender's, but his eyes were deep blue. He was kind, and the five of them made simple conversation as the train pulled away from the station and began its journey towards Hogwarts.

Between guesses of what would await them once they arrived and the stitching of different facts or rumours each of them knew, the five began weaving out their knowledge of the school, unknowingly speaking a ridiculous amount of nonsense, naturally. None of them had any older siblings and the recounts of their parents seemed to produce contrasting information, but they ignored any conflicts and just continued, creating in their minds a vision of the school that they hoped would resemble the real one in at least some way.

After two hours on the train, the group already having revealed everything they believed to know and mesmerised by the scenery that flew by the window, with the endless green fields and the lakes as the steamer continued down its track, the Honeydukes Express finally came to their cabin. Anthony was the first to stand, eyes wide as he took in the number of sweets it carried. The trolley-lady was a plump, round-faced woman with grey hair pulled into a bun. Between the five of them, they bought six chocolate frogs, three slices of cauldron cake, two packets of liquorice wands and eight pumpkin pastries, which Ernie claimed were his favourites.

After sharing the food, the conversation died down as both Parvati and Lavender fell asleep, with Parvati leaning on the window and Lavender leaning on her. Ernie took out a small notebook and began to jot down one thing or another using a quill that seemed not to rely on ink. Anthony and Padma were essentially left to themselves and between silent conversations and small jabs at the other, they laughed quietly and Padma was glad she had already found a friend.

End
file.